5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
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but rather an unaffected equality among all members of the community and a good fellowship and free association on that basis which is one of the most beautiful things in the world. The women share this freedom, and are engaged with the men in practically every activity that is useful in keeping the wolf from the door. Men and women fight side by side for a naked existence, and there is no submission to anything or anybody, except to God above.

It is a hard life, but the desert is a maker of men. Women may express their feelings, their joys and their griefs, but men are expected to remain silent and self-controlled, and magnificent Stoics some of them are. An old patriarch came to the Bahrein Hospital bringing for treatment his only son, the pride of his life and the joy of his heart. They had come a long distance, two weeks' journey. The old man had the light of a father's pride in his eye and the shadow of a father's anxiety was there, too.

"My boy has been sick for some time. I have brought him here for you to cure."

My heart sank at the boy's appearance. "Does he cough?"

"Yes, he coughs a great deal. That is the trouble."

"Does he cough up any blood?"

"Yes, he has done that several times."

It gave me almost the sensation of physical faintness that one feels when in an elevator that is shot down rapidly, to see that fine old man standing there and to know what we would have to tell him, but we examined the boy carefully first. There were large cavities in both lungs. He was far beyond all hope. The whole faculty of Johns Hopkins could not have helped him. "My

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758 865 father," I said, "I have no medicine that will do the boy any good."

It was easy to see that the reply was not entirely unexpected, but already I talked to a different man. "Is there perhaps some operation you can perform for him?" asked the old man slowly and gravely. "We have heard that you do many marvelous things by means of the knife."

"My father, it is quite true that we operate here on many people and use the knife a great deal, but there is no operation that will do him any good either."

"Then," said the father, "will he die?"

"Yes, he will die. He has only a few days or months at the outside. No doctor can do him any good. He is in the hands of God."

"Yes," said the old man quietly. "Praise the Lord anyway," and he turned to leave, a bent and pitiful old man. The light had died out of his eyes, and the spring had gone from his steps; he was the picture of broken grief, but there was not a tear nor a complaint, nor did his steady eyes waver as he looked straight into my own. We tried to get him to stay for a few days and rest before starting on the return journey, but his reply was simple and final. "No," he said, "we appreciate your hospitality, but the boy would rather die in his own country with his mother."

593 [596] By far the most beautiful family life in Arabia is found among the Bedouins. Poverty enforces a monogamy which their religion does not require, and as might be expected, divorce is less common and the whole atmosphere of society infinitely cleaner than in other Arab communities. Often a family life is found that is very beautiful. The loyalty of the various members of such

k: Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
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Chap. III

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A man's first duty is towards God.
His second, the protection of his tent neighbour (*qasir*).
His third, attention to the laws of Hospitality (*dhidfa*).
His fourth, his duty towards a traveller under his conduct (*rafiq*).
His fifth, attention to the laws of Personal Protection and Sanctuary (*wejh* and *dakhála*.)
His sixth and last is to himself: to raid when he can and keep what he has captured (*chessib*).

It is noteworthy that in fulfilling this last duty he thinks of it as a sort of reward for what has gone before. Raiding is no sin, but a virtue, [721] and to kill your enemy a still greater virtue. Therefore, to steal your enemy's cattle is not robbery but an exploit to be proud of. Your enemy will do the same to you to-morrow if he gets the chance. (See Chapter VII.)

THE BADAWIN WOMAN (*Badawiyah*)

Taking the good with the bad, the Badawin woman is nearly all 157 charm, the natural charm of an unspoiled daughter of Eve, who knows nothing of the world, and little of town life except from hearsay.

She has very much of the child about her; all the delightfulness and all the unreasonableness of a child.

She is prone to sudden storms of rage, and will sulk without apparent reason. She is full of jealousy, and will love and hate with passion and ferocity, yet she can be the gentlest of beings and is capable of great sacrifice. She adores her children, though she has no idea of [855] teaching them discipline or self-control; she will fly at her husband, if he attempts to punish their child, and will go off the deep end if her husband does not sleep close by her side (*ma yargud wiyha*) every night.

Badawin unmarried girls are, of course, debarred from any male 562 society or male friendships outside the circle of their own immediate 834 families, but married women have far more freedom than their town sisters, and can be on delightfully friendly terms with males of their own *taifa* or *hamula*. They have strong ideas of propriety, and are sensitive to a degree about their reputation. The most 521 dreadful thing in the world that can happen to them is to be talked 558

k Dickson G-8 (1929-47) 1961 MI 1 Kuwait
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844 for the purpose. The mother lived, and her father personally thanked me for lending the mare and saving his daughter. In the absence of my mare a similar request for the loan of my horse was made (25th August, 1937). Unfortunately in this case the patient died.

855 The rights of a Badawin father over his children are absolute; the 586 mother has practically no rights. Should a man divorce his wife, the sons usually go with the father and the girls with the mother. Should the children be infants, the mother keeps them until they can fend for themselves, and then the father comes and takes them away. (The age in the case of boys is eight.) This removal of a son by his father is the cause of much heartrending grief at times, but is universally practised.

The children thus taken away from their mother live with their father and are brought up by their stepmother. They have the right of visiting their own mother's tent at stated intervals, usually once a week. In a tribe camped together the hardship is not great, but when a man has married a woman from another tribe, the rule causes much unhappiness, as the woman usually goes back to her people, who may be several hundreds of miles away; and she rarely sees her children again.

855 Among the Al Sa'ud, Al Subah, etc., it is a common custom to have 643 as wives two or three Badawin lasses at a time, who always remain camped with their own people. When a child is born to one of these desert-dwelling wives it is usually taken right away and brought up in the shaikh's household in Kuwait or Riyadh. It is not considered fitting that the offspring of one of the ruling family, even if the mother is of noble tribal birth, should be left to grow up in tribal surroundings.

587 This feeling is particularly strong if the child is a boy.* As a matter of fact, in such alliances the wife is early divorced and pensioned off with a handsome present. This marrying of tribal girls in addition to the "Queen", who is always a lady of the ruling family, is a normal and accepted practice among the ruling classes in Arabia. It is a method of showing honour to a tribe, and brings useful alliances in its train. Tribal shaikhs, on the other hand, usually content themselves with one wife.

* This does not run counter to the age-long custom among the nobility of Arabia of sending their sons into the desert to be brought up by the Badawin in order that they may acquire hardihood.